

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 /079 W

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O 011818Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7395

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: ONE-DAY "GENERAL STRIKE" IN MADRID FIZZLES

REF: MADRID 7493

1. JUDGING FROM REPORTS RECEIVED UP TO THE LATE AFTERNOON, MOST WORKERS IGNORED THE CALL FOR A ONE-DAY GENERAL STRIKE IN MADRID ON OCTOBER 1. THE CALL FOR A "DAY OF STRUGGLE" HAD BEEN ISSUED BY VARIOUS LEFTWING GROUPS AS A PROTEST AGAINST THE SLAYING OF A STUDENT BY SUSPECTED RIGHTWING GUNMEN ON SEPT. 27. REPORTESLY, THE MAJOR PLANTS IN MADRID'S INDUSTRIAL SECTOR WERE IN LARGE PART OPERATING NORMALLY. IT ALSO APPEARED TO BE BUSINESS AS USUAL IN OFFICES AND SHOPS DOWNTOWN. THERE WAS SOME SLOWDOWN OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY DURING THE MORNING RUSH HOURS. CONSTRUCTION SITES WERE APPARENTLY THE HEAVIEST HIT, AND THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS CLAIMED THAT 200,000 WORKERS WERE OUT. OTHER ESTIMATES WERE LOWER, WITH THE OFFICIAL FIGURE AT NOON SET AT 25,000 PROVINCE-QIDE.

2. A LABOR LEADER FROM THE SOCIALIST UGT TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE STRIKE WAS ONLY "PARTIAL." HE SAID

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THAT THE POSITIONS OF THE VARIOUS TRADE UNIONS HAD BEEN

CONFUSING AND AT TIMES CONTRADICTORY. AS A CONSEQUENCE, IT WAS MORE OR LESS LEFT UP TO INDIVIDUAL CENTERS OR FACTORIES TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER TO GO OUT OR NOT. THE UGT, FOR EXAMPLE, LEFT IT UP TO ITS VARIOUS FEDERATIONS TO DECIDE. THE RESULT WAS THAT THERE WERE MANY MORE CASES OF SLOWDOWNS AND "MOMENTS OF SILENCE" THAN ACTUAL WALKOUTS. THE UGT LEADER NOTED THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME CONCENTRATIONS IN VARIOUS SECTORS OF MADRID AT 8 P.M. WHICH COULD PROVOKE SOME INCIDENTS. THE FAR RIGHT, HE SAID, WOULD LIKE TO SEE TROUBLE IN THE STREETS. IT WAS ALSO REPORTED THAT A MASS WAS TO BE HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID CHAPEL, AND THAT SOME OF THE STUDENTS COULD BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO DEMONSTRATE AFTERWARDS.

3. ACCORDING TO EYEWITNESSES, SECURITY FORCES WERE STANDING BY AT VARIOUS STRATEGIC POINTS, INCLUDING GUARDIA CIVIL ELEMENTS IN THE VILLAVERDE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR. ALTHOUGH NO REAL INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED AS YET, SEVERAL PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED AT DIFFERENT POINTS, MOSTLY FOR DISTRIBUTING LEAFLETS OR PAINTING GRAFITTI.

4. AS THE CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT PAPER YA POINTED OUT THE MORNING OF OCT1, MANY HAVE REACTED CRITICALLY TO THE STRIKE CALL, NOTING THAT THE TIME WAS INOPPORTUNE AND COULD DAMAGE THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS. SUPPORTING THIS LINE OF THOUGHT, UNSIGNED LEAFLETS WERE DISTRIBUTED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF MADRID WHICH CALLED FOR PEACE, WORK, AND JUSTICE SAYING "NO" TO VIOLENCE, POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM, AND THE "DAY OF STRUGGLE."
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